4: Cross L-5 (no date) 1948 E16 Slavs E16

175* 643 177 eign works translated in his reign were mostly technical handbooks. He insisted on Western European costume, not from any aesthetic consideration, but because it was more practical and more comfortable to work in than the old Muscovite kaftan with its long sleeves. To prosecute his ends, he was obliged to create a bureaucracy whom he recruited from all strata of society, having little regard for origins if they were intelligent and efficient. Russian culture in Peter's day consisted of the tsar and his pathetically small group of specialists working at killing speed and pressure to overcome the national inertia.

484 175* 643 177 But Peter abolished previous restrictions on foreign travel, and young aristocrats were sent abroad to study and to learn how the Europeans actually lived. The tsar traveled in foreign countries himself. Foreign specialists entered the Russian service in unparalleled numbers. His reign brought to light no liberal tendencies, however, since the nobility absorbed the new bureaucracy and strengthened its hold on the national substance. Yet the channel was opened for a new complex of ideas. Peter forced his subjects to go abroad to study engineering and anatomy, and they observed humanity and the mechanism of states. Unsuccessful attempts to limit the absolute power of the throne were made immediately after Peter's death in 1725.

175* 177 ●535 536 New notions of the amenities of social intercourse and of the pleasures offered by arts, music, the dance, and literature were added to Peter's more materialistic innovations when his daughter Elizabeth came to the throne in 1741, with the result that French civilization acquired a dominance in Russian intellectual life which it began to lose only at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The origins of the Russian ballet go back to 1735, in the reign of Elizabeth's cousin Anna, who also introduced Italian opera, but the French theater reached St. Petersburg in Elizabeth's reign, which also witnessed the beginnings of the native Russian drama composed in the French pseudoclassic vein of Corneille, Racine, and Molière.

6: Mousset H-4 (no date) 1950 E16 Slavic Peoples E16

829 a nostalgic halo. It was no doubt the manifestation of Russian spiritual life which was responsible for the wildest craze in • [535] France. At the beginning of this century, Serge Daghilev's ballets had a pronounced effect, not only on choreography, but [533] also on the decorative arts. Music and the dance were, for a decade or two, the messengers of Russian civilisation which met with the best reception. This means that they reached only an *élite*. Naturally, this is not the place to trace the history of the penetration of the Russian genius into France; we can only note those of its revelations in which, according to current opinion, a specifically Slavonic character could be recognised.

As for the political manifestations, they awakened more curiosity than understanding. The visit of the Russian sovereigns to Paris in 1896 aroused the enthusiasm of a crowd which seems to have seen mainly its exotic aspect. Amusing as it may seem, moreover, what little popularity Imperial Russia enjoyed in France was due to Jules Verne's novel, *Michel Strogoff*. An anthology could be made of the works of pure imagination which have moulded the images under which nations see each other. (*Carmen*, for instance, still sums up all that many French people know of Spain.) The figure which, to the Russians, has long represented the average Frenchman, is borrowed from the younger Dumas and from . . . Paul de Kock, whose novels enjoyed, in Russia, a vogue we have never suspected.

186* Of the other Slav countries—except Poland, the cult of which was kept alive by romanticism and sacred eloquence—we knew practically nothing. It is in the *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et des curieux* that we find particulars of the two dynasties which disputed the throne in Serbia—just as though these were events taking place in the Antipodes! It was not only the political scene that Russia monopolised; her spiritual brilliance threw into the shade the other Slavonic peoples, whose aspirations—whose very existence even—were revealed to the average Frenchman by the 1914–1918 War. These peoples occupied an as yet unexplored suburb of Europe. To which of them did the famous 'Slavonic charm', discussed in French society, refer? Most certainly, not to the hard-working, rather reserved Czechs, nor to the Bulgars, distrustful and positive. Perhaps to a certain section of Polish society—but, more probably, to refugees who had long since lost all contact with their native soil.